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Resident Evil 5: Still a Travesty on All Counts The Substance of Truth By Tolu Olorunda BlackCommentator.com Columnist

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"The Europeans laughed and the African joined in. They had assassinated my people as well as my new country... In that second I was wounded. My mind struck a truth as an elbow can strike a table edge."

-Angelou, Maya. [All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes](#). New York: Random House, Inc., 1986, pp. 51-52.

June 19, 2008, an article is [published](#), with the title "Resident Evil 5: A Travesty on All Counts." June 20, 2008, an international online community is rallied to war against a writer, for suggestions that a [video game trailer](#) "wasted no time in capitalizing upon the long history of blatant depictions of Africans as savages and helpless imbeciles." He grounded this theory by arguing against the trailer, which, in his words, "featured a Caucasian male mutilating African villages, along with Africans." Using the "not-so ancient history of colonialism and neo-colonialism in Africa," he declared that, "the issue of racial insensitivity and indifference must be brought to the centerfold. This patent-reality must be interrogated excruciatingly to expose the silliness of those who claim the 21st century marked the dawn of a post-racial world." To predict that my sincere analysis of an unequivocally racist depiction of Africans as savages - meant to be shot and extinguished - would result in death-threats, is akin to foreseeing Obama's presidency, a decade earlier. The gaming community, inflamed by my assertion that the portrayal of Africans, in the *Resident Evil 5* series, was inherent racist, launched a grenade of assaults, meant to "teach me a lesson," about speaking blasphemously against the Almighty *Resident Evil (RE)* series. This would serve as a model for anyone who dared question the images game-developers concoct for gamers (their specimen)

- whether containing of racist elements or not. In the interest of clarity, I stand, unashamedly, by every single word contained in the former article.

One of the major concerns expressed, by the *respondents* (more like *assassins*), was my sudden interest in the gaming series, follow the decision to utilize Africa, as the location for the upcoming release. Previous versions had been captured in Europe, South America, Antarctica, and Spain. Many *RE* players questioned this logic. One of them, like several others, put it bluntly: *"Where was Tolu Olorunda when Resident Evil 4 came out and Spanish zombies were being blown away? Where was the outrage then? Where was the anger? Oh that's right, they were SPANISH. I mean hey, it's only noteworthy when there's BLACK zombies right?"* This silly interpretation shouldn't even excite any response from me. That many, otherwise thoughtful, gamers felt it justified to delegitimize my concerns, simply because I did not speak out against the comparable depictions of Spaniards as savages, is a shameful and cynical retort. Though, it speaks to a deeper issue. It suggests that simply because other cultures don't complain, publicly, about the exploitation of their culture, resources, and heritage, Blacks are expected to fall in line, and be mistreated the same way - without any rejection or resistance. This sentiment defends injustice, for reasons unfathomable.

Another major resentment expressed, was the sheer outlining of the racist agendas championed in the *RE 5* trailer. Many gamers convinced themselves, through disciplined self-delusion, that my speaking out against racism, is the essence of racism, itself. They ran laps around logic, arguing that, in 2008 (then), anyone still "complaining" about racism was an accomplice to the system which maintains it. Many gamers echoed that sentiment with unbelievable audacity. A few highlights below:

"Morons like you are why people are racist against blacks in the first place."

- *Anonymous*

"You are the reason Racism still thrives. You have jumped on the bandwagon of what I like to call Reverse-Racism. This is where an individual of any race claims racism in everything they see regardless if it is or not. It's a self pity syndrome... You guys want to latch on to whatever you can to make people feel bad for you."

- *Anonymous*

"Racism exists due to dumbasses like this guy - want some cheese with that wine? If anything perpetuates racism, it's retards like you who see it."

- *Anonymous*

"This idiot WANTS people to be racist that way he can cry persecution and gets to keep his job."

- *Oz*

Though many gamers claimed to be equally outraged at the racism charge lobbed at their precious series, many of the [comments put forth](#) validated my assertions with ease. [Hundreds of comments](#), meant to be critical of me, [revealed the sadistic intentions](#) of various *RE 5* players, and confirmed what was imprinted in the article - that graphic images play a part in molding and shaping the psychology of the mind, and perhaps, *RE 5's* decision to insert a White male, as the protagonist, in the mutilation of those Africans, was simply fodder for many-a-gamers' fantasies. Most of the

comments, as explained, were punctuated by unfettered racist convictions. A few highlights below (Language Advisory):

"YOU MEAN I GET TO SHOOT WAVES UPON WAVES OF NEGROS, AS A WHITE POLICEMAN! SWEET! WHEN DOES THIS GAME RELEASE?"

-Anonymous

"Niggers need to die anyway."

-Anonymous

"They should kill niggers in every videogame."

-Anonymous

"I find Negroids to be the most racist people on Earth and this retarded article only serves to strengthen my views. Negros shouldn't be wiped out, just the retarded, hate filled, racist ones like yourself Mr. Tolu."

-Anonymous

"I'm sick of blacks acting like they're the only race that was ever enslaved. As far as slavery goes, they've had it the EASIEST of nearly every group."

-Anonymous

"You're a stupid fucking nigger and you know it. Did you complain when CJ in GTAIV killed white people? No. So shut the fuck up you stupid cotton picking piece shit."

-Anonymous

"We don't hate you. Look what we've done for you. We abolished slavery, we built your colleges, we gave you your jobs. If it wasn't for white people's sympathy, you wouldn't be able to post your ridiculous thoughts."

-Anonymous

"Let's face it people, and let's all be honest here. The African people are savages! Why will no one admit to this? Just look at the entire continent, savagery reigns supreme."

-Anonymous

"THE ONLY PEOPLE WHO ACTAULLY THINK THIS GAME IS RACIST ARE STUPID BLACK FOLK WITH NOTHING BETTER TO DO... THEY ARE THE RACIST ONES! I MYSELF CAN'T WAIT TO KILL ME SOME AFRICAN ZOMBIES JUST TO PISS OFF ALL YOU RACIST BASTARDS."

-Anonymous

A few other gamers felt it wise to ask why anyone would "go after" a video game. In their imagination, a video game is as harmless as belief in the tooth fairy. "Really going after a game about Racism?" one commenter queried. "IT IS A GAME," he/she insisted. Once again, those respondents do the international gaming community a great disservice, with such simple-minded, intellectually-paralyzed comments. [Studies](#) upon

[studies](#), which have [documented the effects](#) of laborious game-playing, cannot be rendered insignificant, to quell the hurt feelings of some gamers. Those studies which link spikes in violence and aggression, in teens and adolescents, and excessive video-gaming, have helped put to bed arguments that maintain games ought to be taken with a grain of salt, for they can do no harm. Judging by the comments listed above, it would be criminal to discredit such great research.

The most asinine of the defenses presented came, admittedly, from an unexpected angle. Among other contentions articulated, several gamers suggested that the bulk of my criticism is illegitimate, because the producer of the game is Japanese, and thus, renders all racism charges invalid. *"The game is made by japanese people who have never had a problem with slavery or colonialism,"* one gamer stated. This great student of history should have been openly berated by his fellow gamers, but that theme soon became recurrent, amongst the community. Beyond the blatant escape of Japan's enslavement of Korean peoples, the gamer also rejected all evidence, documented by numerous historians, of the enslavement of Africans in Asia. The anonymous gamer also seemed to intimate that because Jun Takeuchi, the *Resident Evil 5* producer, is of Japanese origin, he possesses no racist bone in his body. The U.S. '08 presidential election would certainly not be registered in the pages of history, before Obama was [celebrated as a monkey](#) (apparently, [not a phenomenon](#) in Japan), by the Japanese Mobile Company, *E Mobile*. It was also a Japanese game-show which, a couple of weeks back, rendered a tribute to Obama, with a street-magician [performing in Blackface](#) (another norm, [reportedly](#), in Japan).

What should be apparent by now, is that video games are not silly exercises, but rather, complex functions that must be understood, and interrogated, if one is to avoid becoming subdued by the tantalizing impulses they provide. As fans go out this week, to pick up their copies of *Resident Evil 5*, it is my hope that they understand the responsibility that comes with manipulating images, which resemble historical accounts of genocide. They must come to terms with the images being fed into their (sub) consciousness, and wrestle vigorously with the caution of my speech. I depart with the courageous words of a gamer, who, embarrassed by her fellow peers' unconscionable remarks, felt the need to pen this reply:

"The degree of hatred found in this comment thread is mind-boggling. I am so utterly disgusted with the behavior of these ignorant, racist commenters, and I am sorry that you, Tolu Olorunda, have had to endure this vicious abuse. These people are sick. All of the people criticizing you for 'not doing your research' before writing this post are completely wrong. I'm a gamer, I've enjoyed the Resident Evil series from the start and your post was absolutely spot on. Thank you for having the courage to write this."

-Olivia

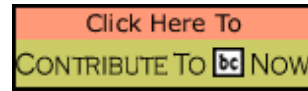
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BlackCommentator.com Columnist, Tolu Olorunda, is an activist/writer and a Nigerian immigrant. Click [here](#) to reach Mr. Olorunda.

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